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UNCLAS YEREVAN 000516

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: REACTION FROM YEREVAN, ARMENIA: PRESS  
CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADOR JOHN ORDWAY

1. SUMMARY: All mass media widely covered Ambassador John Ordway's press conference held on February 27. TV reports were mainly accurate and factual. The printed press, however, carried some comments on the Ambassador's answers regarding the murder of the Armenian officer in Budapest and the Karabakh peace process. The following is the summary of those articles. END SUMMARY

DELAY WILL NOT BRING ANY BENEFIT. U.S. WILL DO  
EVERYTHING TO PREVENT RESUMPTION OF WAR

2. Oppositionist Armenian daily HAYKAKAN ZHAMANAK (02/28) wrote: "Ambassador Ordway mentioned that the likelihood of a resumption of military action is very low and they (the U.S.) will do everything to make sure this does not happen. Mr. Ordway assured several times during the press conference that they don't see preparations on either side for breaking the cease-fire." "As to the militaristic statements recently heard from Azerbaijan, the West, as it became clear from the US Ambassador's words, does not take them seriously. According to John Ordway, if we study the situation over a period of several years, we can see that sometimes these threats and statements were made more frequently. At the same time, Ambassador Ordway mentioned numerous times during the conference that such statements were made on both sides." Commenting on Kocharian-Aliyev meetings the newspaper wrote: "Ordway expressed hope that those meetings would continue in the future and would take place both as special meetings and within the framework of international events. It can be concluded from this that there are no talks about concrete meetings."

POSSIBILITY OF ROSE REVOLUTION DOES NOT REFER TO ANY  
CONCRETE COUNTRY

3. Centrist Armenian language daily AZG (02/28) wrote: "The monthly press conference with US Ambassador John Ordway almost became a discussion on the situation in the region." Commenting on the recent statements made by Azeri President Aliyev on starting the negotiation process (on Nagorno Karabakh) from zero the newspaper said: "However, the Ambassador does not think that Azerbaijan's intention to start negotiations from zero implies moving the process to the battle field." "As to the militaristic statements, the Ambassador is sure - as opposed to the journalists' insistency - that similar statements were also made in Armenia, and one can be convinced of that by reading the local press." As to the negotiation process the newspaper wrote: "The Ambassador mentioned that he saw indications from both sides on their readiness to restart the negotiations, being committed to the previous principles. In spite of journalists' insistent efforts, John Ordway did not reveal what those indications were."

NEGOTIATION PROCESS WOULD BE ENCOURAGED

4. Dashnak-affiliated HAYOTS ASHKHAR (02/28) wrote: "In spite of all the attempts by the Azeri side to deny the existence of the Paris and Key West principles, the Ambassador actually confirmed that there were such principles." "The Ambassador stated that there is no need to pay attention to militaristic statements, which according to him, are made not only in Azerbaijan but also in Armenia. When asked to bring a single concrete example the Ambassador tried to avoid this answer and suggested reading the (Armenian) press." "In connection with the murder of the Armenian officer in Budapest the Ambassador expressed regret but refused to predict what kind of impact this might have on the negotiation process." "At the same time the Ambassador does not think that Azerbaijan should be left out of further NATO programs because of the crime committed in Budapest. It turned out that it is still too early to draw conclusions as to the motives of this murder." It is not new that politics implies double standards. But

at least in this case one does not have to be that duplicitous."

ORDWAY